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# NSSC This Week

Natick Soldier Systems Center Public Affairs Office



## Cooler feet

**New hot weather mountain combat boot**

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Original photo by David Kamm, NSRDEC Photographer



# Cooler feet

## Putting new boots on the ground

By Bob Reinert, USAG-Natick Public Affairs / NATICK, Mass. (June 17, 2013)

What it all comes down to is keeping Soldiers' minds on their missions in Afghanistan, rather than on their feet.

That's how Ben Cooper views the development of the Hot Weather Mountain Combat Boot, or HWMCB, at Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center, which began in spring 2011. Cooper thought it was so important that he got permission to continue working on the boot after leaving the Footwear Performance Laboratory at NSRDEC to become a senior materials engineer for the Air Force, still situated at Natick.

"Ben was so involved in the early phases of this and had been really running this project superbly, I thought that it was a good idea that he was able to continue on this project," said Bob Hall, the current Army footwear engineer.

"Obviously, in these fiscal times, being able to join together and work toward a common goal for the warfighter and for our country, I think, is the most important thing," Cooper said. "My supervisors have been very supportive about me taking time to help out and support the Army with this effort, and we're all happy to do it."

"The Air Force has been a team player in this," he continued. "It's a sister service — one team, one fight."

Cooper and Hall are working with Program Executive Office Soldier and Product Manager Soldier Clothing and Individual Equipment to unveil phase two of the boot. Phase one — a lighter, more breathable version of the popular Mountain Combat Boot — has been issued to every Soldier deploying to Afghanistan for the past year. As many as 200,000 pairs of the boots have

been fielded with great success.

"(For) the amount of boots that are out there, we've had very, very few complaints," Hall said.

"Soldiers will give you honest feedback," Cooper said. "We haven't heard bad things. In this business, silence is a great thing."

Cooper pointed out that nothing like the HWMCB existed before Soldiers in Afghanistan began asking for it two years ago.

"We were trying to develop and identify the salient characteristics of a Hot Weather Mountain Combat Boot," Cooper said. "Since it was a new item, it's not commercially available. We evaluated three different material solutions at that time from three different manufacturers."

Using Soldier feedback from phase one, which included requests for more breathability, Cooper and Hall confidently strode into phase two.

"We cherry-picked the very best features on each of the boots, and we provided that feedback to industry," Cooper said. "They responded and provided new solutions, updated solutions."

Three new styles are now being evaluated at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif., by units from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, based at Fort Carson, Colo. Each boot is nearly a half-pound lighter than the original mountain boot.

"Due to Afghanistan's unique climate and environment, they needed a boot that not only would provide them ankle stability and traction and durability, but they also needed greater breathability," Cooper said. "It's a

balancing act. We were constantly walking that fine line. I think that we have worked with industry tirelessly on trying to make sure that we accomplish exactly what the warfighter wants and needs."

Industry made the boots more breathable by including moisture-wicking linings, perforating the leather, and inserting textiles wherever possible between the leather and rubber, without compromising stability.

"It took some creative approaches to be able to do that," Cooper said. "If you're kicking rocks, and you're crawling, and you're in the prone position, you need to be able to not have this thing rip."

Cooper will travel to Fort Irwin at the end of June with Chris King, of the Operational Forces Interface Group at Natick, to collect data from Soldiers on the 285 pairs of boots that had been issued to them.

The goal is a technical specification for a boot that could be supplied by any manufacturer. When it's achieved, said Cooper, it will be because of the "collaborative atmosphere" at Natick.

"I think that's just part of the culture that is here, and I'm proud to be a part of that," he continued. "We were able to leverage all the resources that we have available to us."

Ben Cooper (left) and Bob Hall have been working on the development of phase two of the Hot Weather Mountain Combat Boot at Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center.



# Greata takes command

## USAG-Natick welcomes new leader

By Tazanyia Mouton, USAG-Natick Public Affairs / NATICK, Mass. (June 20, 2013)

Two years and 10 days after taking the leadership of the U.S. Army Garrison-Natick, Lt. Col. Frank Sobchak handed off command to Lt. Col. Brian Greata in a June 20 ceremony at the Natick Soldier Systems Center.

Prior to the ceremony, Sobchak received the Meritorious Service Medal for his time in command of the Natick garrison.

“I was fortunate to have many tenant leaders who went out of their way every day to help me and the garrison,” Sobchak said. “Sometimes it was simply providing information on a trend or a problem that we weren’t seeing clearly. Other times, it was their flexibility and understanding.”

Sobchak said he was appreciative of the support he has received.

“I was also incredibly fortunate throughout this entire process to have the assistance, counsel, and love of my wonderful wife, Lt. Col. Risa Sobchak. You are the best wife and partner I could have ever wished for and I am so lucky to be your husband.”

Davis Tindoll, director of the Atlantic Region, United States Army Installation Management Command, also had great things to say about Sobchak.

“The Army does not train Soldiers to be garrison commanders,” Tindoll said. “But it does develop leaders—leaders who are capable, innovative, and motivated, to handle the challenges of command.”

“Lt. Col. Sobchak is one of those outstanding leaders. Over the last two years of his command, Lt. Col. Sobchak has been a champion.”

Tindoll emphasized Sobchak being a champion of physical fitness, readiness, community involvement, and most importantly, of this great installation.

**“The Army does not train Soldiers to be garrison commanders. But it does develop leaders—leaders who are capable, innovative, and motivated, to handle the challenges of command.”**

—Davis Tindoll, Director, Atlantic Region, IMCOM

“His accomplishments have been many during his tenure,” Tindoll said. “Most importantly, Frank demonstrated leadership and was a champion of the workforce; leading this garrison as they provided world class customer service during reshaping and sequestration.

“Frank, you have done well and I am very proud of your success. I know the Natick community is proud of you and thankful for the achievements your leadership has brought to this community.”

With bidding farewell to one commander, we welcome another.

“Lt. Col. Greata, a career special operations Soldier, has held a variety of command and operational assignments to include multiple deployments,” Tindoll said. “His assignments, extensive experience and military education offer impeccable credentials for command of this garrison.

“I am confident that with your demonstrated leadership, you will build on the successes of your predecessor. The challenges are many, but I am confident you will bring new energy and excellence to Natick.”

Greata says he is thankful for all the help he has received while preparing for his command.

“Getting to know each (director) and (its) missions has been a pleasure,” Greata said. “As I continue to orient myself to the post and its tenants, I look forward to getting to know each of you better as well.”

The new commander spoke of the welcome he received.

“My family and I are very happy to be here at Natick,” said Greata. “We’ve appreciated your warm welcome and assistance we’ve received from everyone on post and in the community. And of course, I’m very excited to take command of the great Soldiers and civilians of the U.S. Army Garrison-Natick.”





By Bob Reinert, USAG-Natick Public Affairs / NATICK, Mass. (June 26, 2013)

# Drawing attention to PTSD

Veteran comic strip artist Mort Walker uses 'Beetle Bailey' to launch public service campaign

**Fans** of the long-running comic strip "Beetle Bailey" got a bit of a surprise June 16, when its creator, Mort Walker, chose to set aside his usual military-inspired humor to tackle a more serious subject.

That day's three-panel strip showed Beetle Bailey experiencing the signs and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, known as PTSD — including nightmares and trouble sleeping. The third panel reminds readers that "Post-traumatic stress can affect any Soldier." That message from Walker helped kick off a public service campaign by the Red Sox Foundation and Massachusetts General Hospital Home Base Program to bring attention to the invisible wounds of war — post-traumatic stress and traumatic brain injury — during June, National PTSD Awareness Month.

The Home Base program, founded in 2009, has provided clinical treatment for more than 600 veterans and family members, and has educated more than 7,500 clinicians nationwide about PTSD and traumatic brain injury, known as TBI.

In a video he recorded, Walker, an 89-year-old Army veteran of World War II, discussed why he used Beetle Bailey to help shed light on this issue.

"I feel so sorry for the veterans that have that post-traumatic stress," Walker said. "I would do anything to help them — even one, even one, if I could."

In the three-minute video, Walker talks about growing up in the Midwest, becoming a cartoonist, and developing the Beetle Bailey characters based on his Army experience.

"If you can make somebody happy, boy, I'll tell you, that cures all kinds of problems that people have," Walker said. "It's my business, in a way, and I enjoy that part of it."

**"I feel so sorry for the veterans that have that post-traumatic stress. I would do anything to help them — even one, even one, if I could."**

— Mort Walker,  
"Beetle Bailey" creator

Beetle Bailey is one element of the Home Base campaign's series of messages about helping Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and their families recover from those invisible wounds. Developed pro bono by advertising firm Hill Holliday, it features print, radio, online, and electronic billboards.

See the ads here <http://bit.ly/14lAndk> and listen to the radio spots here <http://bit.ly/11OiVfw> and here <http://bit.ly/12hXV46>.

"There's no greater honor than being of service to our veterans and military families," said Mike Sheehan, Hill Holliday chairman. "We are honored to offer our resources, creativity

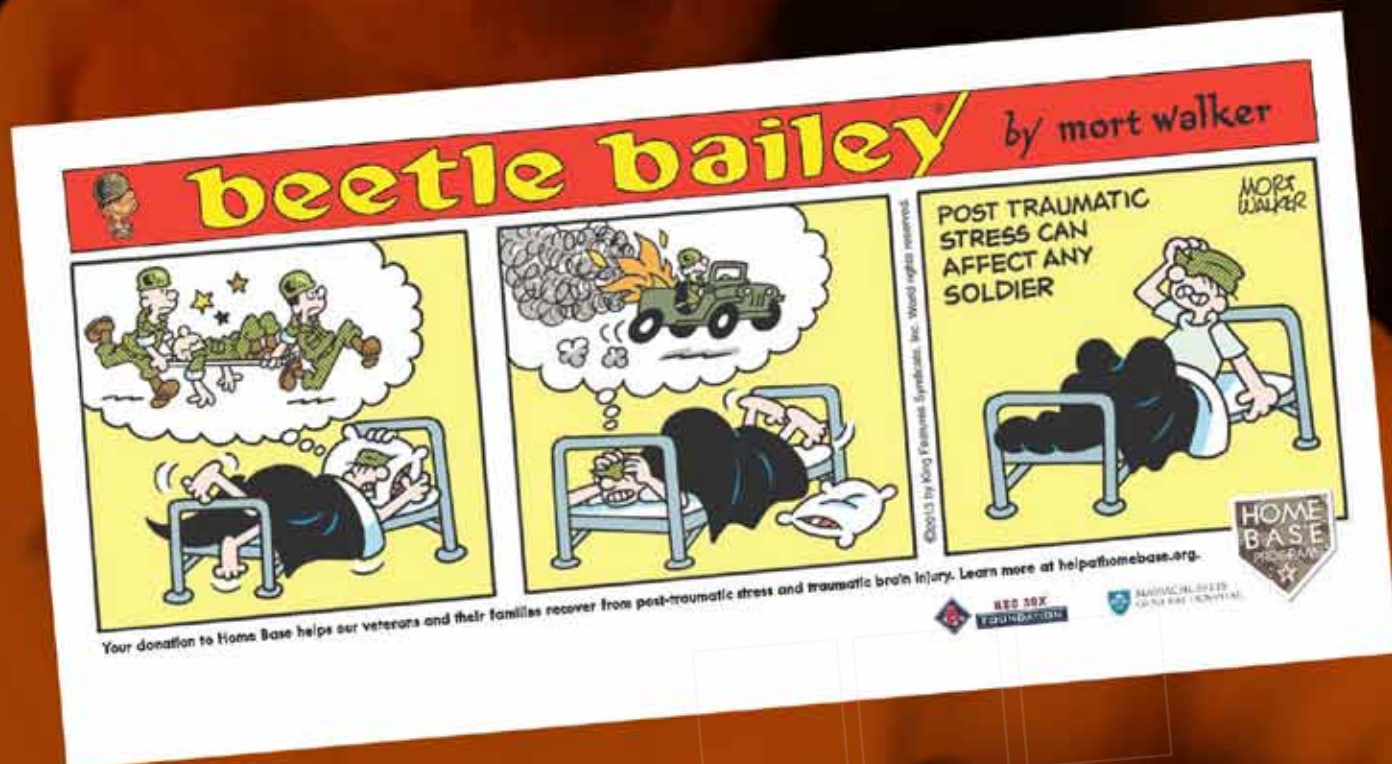
and support to Home Base, and to raise awareness about post traumatic stress and traumatic brain injury. Returning veterans and their families deserve every resource available to help them adjust to life back home."

Numerous media outlets contributed advertising space and time to the Home Base campaign.

"These messages are timely and urgent," said retired Brig. Gen. Jack Hammond, Home Base executive director. "Although the war in Iraq has ended and more troops are returning from Afghanistan, it is critical that we remember that for many veterans and their families, these wars have not ended and the return home has meant nightmares and difficulty sleeping, no longer feeling safe in everyday places, trouble concentrating, severe headaches and family stress."

"The clinicians and staff of Home Base and all of our veterans and family members are so grateful for the talent and generosity of Hill Holliday in creating this unique and very powerful campaign. We are also grateful for the generous contribution of Mr. Mort Walker, and especially to our media partners, who have recognized the importance of this issue and made the decision to step up in support of our returning veterans and families."

For more information about the Home Base program and its public service campaign, visit [www.helpathomebase.org](http://www.helpathomebase.org). To view Mort Walker's video, go to <http://bit.ly/19vbCBo>.







# Natick Soldier re-enlists at Fenway

By Alexandra Foran, NSRDEC Public Affairs / BOSTON (June 13, 2013)

On the grounds of historic Fenway Park, Sgt. Jon Weymouth once again chose to serve his country, re-enlisting this spring as his oldest son, father, and fellow Soldiers stood by his side to support him.

Weymouth, an inspector tester with the Aerial Delivery Directorate, Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center, was raised in the small town of West Newfield, Maine. He called himself a “huge Red Sox fan” and added that he grew up watching the team.

As an eight year old, Weymouth won a radio contest that had a Father’s Day promotion. He explained in a letter to the station why his was the “best dad” and scored tickets to a Red Sox doubleheader against the Indians.

“We sat next to ‘Pesky pole,’ and I was hooked,” said Weymouth of the right-field foul pole.

Weymouth even has a Red Sox tattoo, although he noted that it was “not one of my proudest moments.”

Like every true fan, Weymouth has been with his team through its ups and downs — 2004 was a big year for Red Sox fans, especially

Weymouth, after the infamous 86-year period during which the team was unable to win the World Series.

“My first son was born September 2004,” said Weymouth, “the year Red Sox broke the curse.

“It was a blast to have my son there at Fenway. He could see Ted Williams’ seat in right field — longest home run in Fenway yet. He just got to kind of take in the history.”

After being in the Army Reserve, Weymouth went on active duty in September 2005. His first deployment to Iraq coincided with the second Red Sox world championship of the decade.

“The Red Sox reminded me of home again,” said Weymouth, recalling his deployment. “I would wake up at three in the morning to watch them in the playoffs every day. I was late to work a couple of times because the game ran long. But when they won the World Series, it was my little piece of home.”

Weymouth passed on his love for baseball to his son, who enjoys reading about such baseball players as Babe Ruth, Mickey Mantle, Ted Williams and Pedro Martinez. Weymouth also coaches Little League.

Sgt. Jon Weymouth of the Aerial Delivery Directorate, Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center, right, takes the oath of enlistment administered by CW4 Kevin Wood at Fenway Park.

It wasn’t just baseball history that those gathered during Weymouth’s re-enlistment experienced; all present experienced a part of U.S. history. When Soldiers re-enlist, they must again recite the oath of enlistment, as they did when they first enlisted.

The re-enlistment ceremony can be a simple affair with just a few witnesses, or something more meaningful to the Soldier. One common thread is the presence of the American flag and an officer to administer the oath. CW4 Kevin Wood, senior airdrop systems technician, swore in Weymouth.

“I’ve been extremely fortunate to have been asked to re-enlist over 25 Soldiers during my time as a warrant officer in the Army,” Wood said. “To re-enlist a Soldier is a great honor.”

Wood knows how big a Red Sox fan Weymouth is, and he elaborated on how the greater Boston area is filled with U.S. history.

“I could not think of a more appropriate place for Sergeant Weymouth to raise his hand again to recommit to the Army and continue serve the citizens of our great nation,” Wood said.

For Weymouth, Fenway was the most fitting place to re-enlist.

“When you’re deployed, that’s all you need is something to remind you of home and what you’re fighting for,” said Weymouth. “Mine was my family and baseball, the great American sport.”



## 238 years young

By Bob Reinert, USAG-Natick Public Affairs / NATICK, Mass. (June 14, 2013)

The Natick Soldier Systems Center observed the 238th Army Birthday with a June 14 cake-cutting ceremony in the state where it came into being in 1775.

Brig. Gen. Daniel P. Hughes, NSSC senior commander, flanked by Natick’s oldest civilian employee, Bob Noonan, and its youngest Soldier, Pvt. 2 Tyler Holliday, carved the cake with a sword in a time-honored tradition.

“Today, we celebrate the 238th birthday of the finest army in the history of mankind,” Hughes said. “We stand today less than 20 miles from the birthplace of our Army.”

The Army was born when the Second Continental Congress “adopted” New England militia members around Boston who were opposing British troops. Congress provided \$2 million to support them. George Washington took command of the Continental

Army in Boston on July 3, 1775.

Dr. Jack Obusek, director of the Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center, pointed out that the contributions made by civilians to the Army actually began during the American Revolution.

“It struck me that on that day in April 1775, the call went out, and who did it go out to?” Obusek said. “It went out to ... the Minutemen, the militia, the civilians who heard the call and then would become part of the Continental Army.

“Those civilians continue to contribute with distinction today. They support, they sustain and, yes, provide technologies to the uniformed Soldiers. And I’m amazed every day at the contributions that those civilians make in developing those technologies and (the) new kit and those new capabilities for our Soldiers of tomorrow.”

Brig. Gen. Daniel P. Hughes is flanked by Bob Noonan, left, and Pvt. 2 Tyler Holliday, the oldest civilian employee and youngest Soldier, respectively, during the cake-cutting ceremony that was part of the 238th Army Birthday celebration June 14 at Natick Soldier Systems Center.

The celebration also served as a leadership transition at NSSC, with Hughes taking over from Obusek, who had served as interim senior manager. Obusek remains NSRDEC director.

“What a great officer and a great leader,” said Obusek of Hughes. “I know it means bigger, greater, better things for the Natick Soldier Systems Center.”

As Hughes pointed out, the citizen Army of the American Revolution grew into the strong, courageous, professional force of today.

“This 238th birthday commemorates America’s Army — Soldiers, families and civilians — who are achieving a level of excellence that is truly Army strong,” Hughes said. “We also celebrate our local community, which supports us in this.”

Photo credit: David Kamm, NSRDEC Photographer

Photo Credit: Tanzania Morton, USAG Natick Public Affairs



Photo Credit: Tazanyia Mouton, USAG Natick Public Affairs



# Stressless

## Natick workers learn relaxation techniques

By Tazanyia Mouton, USAG-Natick Public Affairs / NATICK, Mass. (May 24, 2013)

Seventy-five percent of American workers report that their jobs are extremely stressful. About one million people call in sick every day because of stress-related issues.

Stress is the mental, emotional, and physical response that we have to anything that is new, threatening, frightening, or exciting.

“A lot of us have an idea that stress is a negative thing,” said Pamela Santin, senior wellness consultant with Blue Cross Blue Shield Federal Employee Program. “It’s not; stress is a neutral thing. It’s not good or bad. It’s how we choose to interpret that neutral event that decides if it’s positive or negative.”

The energetic and quite comedic one-hour program focused on supplying the tools needed to identify stress and develop healthy and effective strategies for managing stressful situations.

“Stress is a fact of life,” said Santin, “but it doesn’t have to be a way of life.”

Chronic stress also increases your risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes and some cancers, Santin said.

“Control what you have control of ... your own behavior, and let everything else go,” said Santin.

The program paid close attention to the mind-body connection.

“Your body picks the weakest link in your system,” said Santin, “and it pounds away until you listen; we are so bad at listening.

“Your body is doing you a favor; it is telling you that something is wrong. We respond by taking (medicine), ignoring it, going for a massage, calling in for a personal day ... instead of the one thing that actually might work: learning to relax.”

Santin also said relaxation is in all of us; we just need to allow it to happen.

Meditation, exercise, progressive muscle relaxation, and guided imagery are some ways to deal with stress.

“Meditation focuses our mind right here on the present,” Santin said. “When you exercise regularly, your brain releases endorphins that elevate your mood, and it is a fantastic way to manage stress.”

Most people may be familiar with guided imagery as a way of stress management. The most popular type of guided imagery would be listening to audio tracks of birds chirping in a meadow or waves crashing against a shore.

Toward the end of the program, participants had a chance to practice progressive muscle relaxation.

“Get into a nice comfortable position, close your eyes, and just focus on your breathing,” Santin instructed. “Slow, deep inhalations ... gentle exhalations.”

For about 10 minutes, participants were instructed to tighten certain muscle groups for a short period of time and then release them, all while observing the sensation they felt when letting go.

With classes such as this, the goal is for everyone to be stress free in no time.



By Tazanyia Mouton, USAG-Natick Public Affairs / NATICK, Mass. (June 27, 2013)

## Natick lifeguards pool resources

Photo Credit: Tazanyia Mouton, USAG Natick Public Affairs

It’s that time of year again — time for fun in the sun and endless hours by the pool.

But before we head for the multi-colored swimwear, sunscreen and floaties, we have to make sure that we swim as safely as possible this summer.

With this in mind, the Gibson Pool staff held its Lifeguard Emergency Action Plan, or EAP, training here at the Natick Soldier Systems Center June 26.

“The purpose of the EAP drill is to sharpen the skills of our lifeguard staff,” said Sherita Baker, Gibson Pool manager and special events coordinator for Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation, or FMWR.

“We want to make sure that they know how to utilize the training they received for their certification in a constructive and life-saving manner,” said Baker.

With a series of real-life scenarios, the lifeguards’ skills were put to the test.

The first scenario involved the lifeguards rotating to rescue an injured person from the pool. Lifeguards threw either a ring buoy or a life hook to assist the swimmer.

Baker demonstrated the exercise, making sure to always communicate with the swimmer to see if further assistance was needed.

The lifeguards also trained up on how to

remove people from the pool who might not be able to remove themselves, using another lifeguard tool, a spine board.

In his third summer here at Gibson Pool, lifeguard Tyler Page said he feels the training exercise went well.

“I feel good,” said Page. “I think the training definitely helped so if anything does happen, we’ll be ready for it.”

Each year, 6,500 children and adolescents nationally are taken to the hospital because of diving-related injuries. Eighty percent of injuries also occur in shallow water of four feet or less.

“We have implemented a ‘feet first for safety’ approach to our pool,” said Baker. “What we are trying to accomplish is education in a fun and interactive way.

“Our facility is a ‘feet first’ facility; there is no diving at Gibson Pool.”

Oftentimes, swimmers misjudge the water depth and believe they have enough room to dive into a pool. Also, the ledge may make the water appear deeper than it actually is.

“Pool enclosures have many inherent dangers, including the risk of electrocutions due to weather or equipment, heart attack victims, or traumatic injury due to unsafe activity from patrons,” Baker said.

Too often, swimmers sometimes will ‘horse-

play’ around the pool. Baker stressed the importance of the lifeguards taking charge to discourage such activity.

In the final training scenario of the day, a swimmer fell into the pool after playing around the pool’s ledge. With a two-person lifeguard team on watch, one lifeguard began assisting the injured swimmer by entering the water with a rescue tube while the second lifeguard cleared the pool.

Working together, the lifeguards were able to focus in and help the simulated victim.

As the old saying goes, practice makes perfect. And this practice can ensure everyone that the lifeguards will be prepared for whatever is thrown their way during the summer months.

“I think it’s gotten us ready for the summer,” said Anna Euller, a first-year Gibson Pool lifeguard. “Now we really know what we’re doing and how to work together.”

Baker said she was confident that the training kicked her crew into gear.

“They did a really good job,” said Baker. “We’re going to spend the rest of the summer continuing our training to get better.”

Baker plans on executing drills for the lifeguards once a week along with mandatory training that will be performed each month.



# NSSC This Week

## **NSSC**

*Senior Commander*

Brig. Gen. Daniel P. Hughes

*Garrison Commander*

Lt. Col. Brian Greata

*Command Sergeant Major*

Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Beausoleil

*Public Affairs Officer*

John Harlow

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Facebook <http://bit.ly/5tmSRd>

Flickr <http://bit.ly/7BntsV>

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